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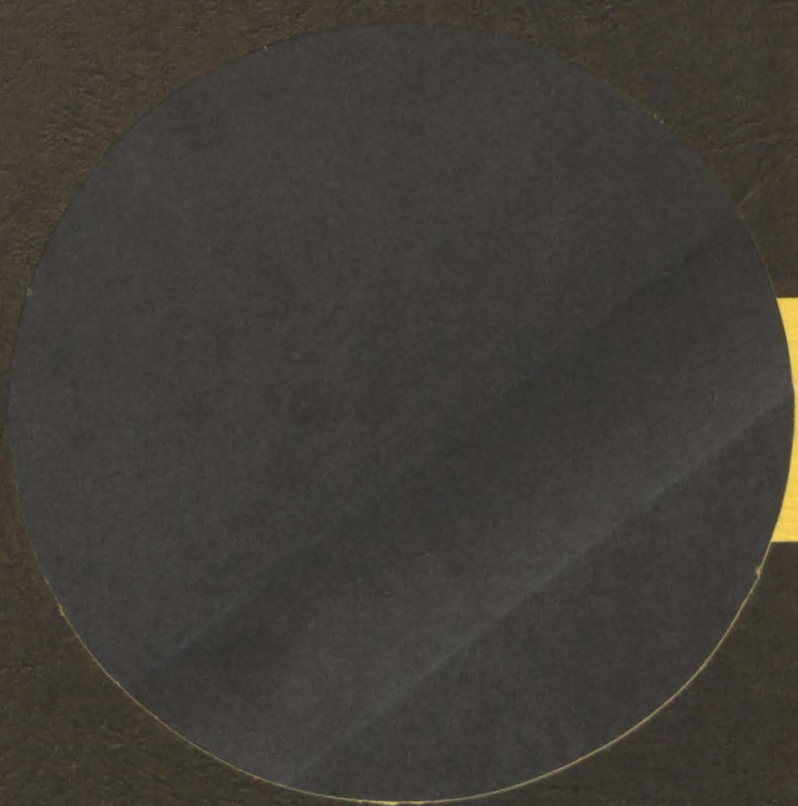
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University of Minnesota

THE TEACHERS OF
MINNEAPOLIS ELEMENTARY INDIAN CHILDREN:
1969 SURVEY RESULTS

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Community Programs
in coordination with the
Office of Community Programs
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University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

December, 1970

THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

THE TEACHERS OF
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1969 SURVEY RESULTS

USOE

December, 1970

OEC-0-8-080147-2805

This is a section of the Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education, which has been funded by the United States Office of Education.

The work reported here is part of a large University of Minnesota project, which has been financed from several sources.

PREFACE

BECAUSE OF FIELD PROBLEMS, DATA ON SPENCER STUDENTS WERE SPARSE.
THIS REPORT CONCENTRATES ON TEACHERS OF MINNEAPOLIS INDIAN CHILDREN.

THE TEACHERS OF
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Introduction

In the late spring of 1969, The Training Center for Community Programs, University of Minnesota, conducted research in several Twin Cities public schools as a function of its role in the National Study of American Indian Education.

One of these schools was Spencer (pseudonym) elementary, a school located somewhat to the south of the inner-city ghetto area in Minneapolis. At the time of the survey, 141 Indian children were enrolled in Spencer, constituting 22.4 percentage of the total student population. In Minneapolis at that time, Indian students numbered 1490 in the total school system; a proportion of 2.1% in the total Minneapolis student population.

While the report which follows concentrates essentially on a sample of teachers within Spencer Elementary school, some data were gathered on Indian children in the school prior to the sudden termination of the research project. The research project was ended because of alleged discomfort on the part of one Indian man who was possibly the spouse of one of the school's teachers. None of the teachers in Spencer Elementary school were Indian. Before the survey work had actually begun in Spencer Elementary, the principal had warned the researchers that "any disturbance" from the Indian community or the community at large could result in a termination of the research project without further question. He lived up to this prediction quite faithfully. The particular circumstances surrounding the dismissal of the research team in Spencer Elementary school will be discussed in the concluding report on the education of Minneapolis Indian children, to be published in mid-summer, 1971.

Background Information on Spencer Elementary School Teachers

Thirteen Spencer teachers participated in the National Study of American Indian Education. Originally eighteen expressed interest; five, however, decided against participating. At least one teacher from each grade (except fifth) took part in the study, as did the librarian, speech therapist, and one SLD teacher.

<u>GRADE OR SPECIALTY</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
One	2	15%
Two	3	30%
Three	1	8%
Four	2	15%
Six	2	15%
SLDR one-six	1	8%
Speech Therapist K-six	1	8%
Librarian K-six	1	8%
	<u>13</u>	<u>99%</u>

Spencer teachers ranged from age twenty-two to fifty-seven. Slightly over half (54%) were in their twenties.

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
22	1	8
23	1	8
24	1	8
26	3	23
29	1	8
38	1	8
39	1	8
47	1	8
57	1	8
No data	2	15
	<u>13</u>	<u>99%</u>

Seventy-eight percent (10) were women; twenty-three percent (3) were men. Half (54%) were married, while one teacher was divorced and 38% were single. Nearly all teachers were caucasian (one was negro).

All of the teachers held B. A. degrees. Three (23%) were working on their M. S. degrees. Two teachers (15%) were completing their first year of teaching, and three (23%) had over ten year's experience.

Teaching Experience

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number of Teachers</u>
1	2
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	1
7	2
8	1
9	1
Over 10	2
20	1

1967 - 68 was the first year 30% (4) of the teachers had spent at Spencer, while one was completing her sixteenth year at the school.

1	4-30%
2	1- 8%
3	2-15%
4	1- 8%
5	2-15%
8	2-15%
16	1- 8%

Most teachers (78%) had worked with Indian students only at Spencer. However, three (23%) reported previous experiences at other schools. One teacher reported two years of contact with Indians (she had spent one year at Spencer); another had 22 years experience (six at Warroad, and sixteen at Spencer); the third teacher had worked with Indians seven years (two at Spencer and five elsewhere).

Teachers Knowledge of and Experience in the Southside Indian Community

Twenty-three percent (3) of Spencer teachers were almost totally uninformed about the Indian people with whom they were involved. They had no experience in the Indian community, and no academic or inservice preparation for teaching Indian children :

I tried to visit a family once but wasn't allowed in. The area is rundown, but you can't judge by the outside. Their major problem is finding employment and wanting to work.

I've never visited an Indian home. The area is poor economically, with rental property. Income is their biggest problem. With my limited experience with Indian children, I wonder how valid my comments are compared to teachers with more experience.

I've never visited an Indian home, but I've been in the neighborhood, it's a low middle class neighborhood. Social status, individual acceptance, lack of education are their major problems.

Limited community experiences, and in most cases minimal inservice or collegiate preparation for working with Indian people were reported by seventy-seven percent (10) of the teachers. However, none of them had made gallant efforts to broaden their base of knowledge. Only twenty percent of these teachers (2) had taken classes dealing with Indians during their college career:

I had a social work class that mentioned them. I had many courses in anthropology about Indian tribal structure and many classes on minority groups (I have a degree in sociology).

One teacher had :

Worked in summer camps where there were children from low-economic families, Indians, Blacks and poor whites.

After receiving their degrees, seventy percent of the teachers had attended inservice lessons or enrolled in collegiate courses concerning minorities :

Inservice:

I had a general human relations seminar before starting teaching here.

A general human relations in service courses.

The Martin Luther King seminars. They are worthless. The Indians told the schools what they want. The schools did not tell the Indians (or other families) what their children needed and lacked in the way of skills for learning.

Collegiate:

On my own time summers and after school I've taken courses about poverty areas including Indian problems.

I've taken social studies courses in which Indians were included among other groups.

I had a course at North on minorities.

Most teachers (80%) in this category had given children rides home, or walked them home, and over half (60%) had visited parents in their homes to discuss school matters or injured children. They assessed the problems confronting Indian people with more knowledge than the former 23%; however, few actually got beyond the superficial nor did they recognize the unique problems which Indians face:

I've tried to visit homes. I've given children rides home and would probably be welcome in many homes. The major problem is that they feel defeated.

I haven't visited Indian homes. They live in the lower socioeconomic level. The major problem is that they are too clannish.

I've visited some homes. I usually have a reason, glasses, etc., though it is not always academic. I give the parents advance notice. I walked home with a child and stopped in. A big problem is employment to start with.

I've given them rides home. I've never gone in or been asked to. One boy seemed embarrassed by the home's condition and appearance. There problems are: lack of money, not enough jobs, poor housing, mobility. The usual low-income area problems.

I haven't visited their homes. There are some rundown areas, some well maintained houses. The area is largely rental. Adjusting to city life, finding employment, finding good housing they can afford are the major problems.

I've had some conferences at home, with at least half of the students. The neighborhood is poorer, lower middle class housing, much rental property. Adjustment to urban life is their biggest problem.

I was invited once and once I took an injured child home and stopped in. The neighborhood is old but fairly well maintained. They need more involvement in school, more education, less crowded living conditions and more parental supervision.

I've been in their homes. The homes are mostly in good condition. Communication, wrong impressions and misinterpretation are their major problems.

I've been to the homes of about half of my students to get help from the parents with learning and discipline problems. The neighborhood is a lower-socio-economic area, mainly rental, poor housing and broken families are the major problems.

I have given some children rides home and volunteered to stop in...some houses were clean, others were not. You can't tell from looking at the outside. Their major problems are: apathy toward education, ignorance of skills their children need to succeed in school. The education of a child begins before he ever arrives in school. Indian families need to learn to stimulate their babies and teach their young how to cope with group situations. So do all parents of children with learning difficulties due to deprived skill background.

Empathy and Understanding of Indian People

Two teachers (15%) were quite critical of Indian people. They had little understanding of the problems facing Minneapolis Indians and no empathy for them. Some comments reflecting this attitude were: "If Indians are poor, it's their fault; wanting to work is a big problem for Indians". "The schools are not failing, they are doing a miraculous job considering the deprivation of children when they begin formal education."

Most teachers (78%-10) expressed vague feeling of empathy for Minneapolis Indians, and regarded their problems as the same problems which all poor or disadvantaged people experience. They saw nothing unique in the Indian's situation, and only superficially "understood" their problems. One teacher (8%) recognized and empathized with some specific problems and aspects of the situation which characterized her Indian pupils' families.

Teachers' Out-of-School Contacts with Indian Students

Seventy-seven percent (10) of Spencer's teachers reported that their Indian students told them about out-of-school activities, such as trips "up north," favorite television programs, powwows, movies, baseball games etc. However, none of them had out-of-school contacts with Indian children in their classrooms. A few teachers (23%-3) had observed Indian children or participated with them in activities entirely connected with school:

I've seen them at the Indian center on Franklin Avenue.

I've observed them in YMCA groups. I volunteer my time for family night at Spencer on Thursday nights. I've taken kids to the circus.

I've had them over to my house in small groups.

Teacher's Contact with Indian Parents and their Perception of Parental Interest in their Children's Education

All of the teachers had opportunities to meet and discuss Indian students' progress with their parents. Twenty-three percent (3) reported contact with roughly 10-40% of the Indian parents, while most teachers (77%-10) had occasion to meet all or nearly all of their Indian students' parents. Discussions usually occurred with the mothers of Indian children (according to sixty percent (8) of the teachers). Half of the teachers reported talking to parents at open house and/or parent-teacher conferences. In addition, three (23%) had met them at PTA.

<u>Parent-Teacher Contacts</u>	<u>N - %</u>
<u>Circumstances</u>	
Open house	2 - 15%
Open house and conferences	4 - 30%
Open house, conferences, family night	1 - 8%
Conferences and PTA	1 - 8%
Open house, conferences, PTA	2 - 15%
No data given	3 - 23%
TOTAL	13 - 99%

Teachers assessed parental interest in their children's school progress in varying ways. Forty-six percent (6) felt parents were generally cooperative and/or interested in helping their children improve. A few teachers (15%) agreed that at least half of the parents were either indifferent or uncooperative. Although they did not evaluate parental interest in the education of their children, twenty-three percent of the teachers thought Indian parents were "friendly."

Teachers' Perception of Parental Interest in the Education of Their Children

	<u>N - %</u>
They were friendly	3 - 23%
They were friendly and cooperative	1 - 8%
They seemed interested	1 - 8%
They were interested and cooperative	2 - 15%
They were very cooperative	1 - 8%
They were cooperative except for one	1 - 8%
Half were cooperative, I got no answers	1 - 8%
from others	
They were generally indifferent, some	1 - 8%
showed concern	
No data	2 - 15%
TOTAL	<u>13 - 99%</u>

Additional information concerning teacher's perception of parental interest in education was derived from a questionnaire completed by twelve teachers. Nearly half (45%) felt that a conflict existed between what most Indian parents taught their children and what Spencer school tried to teach them. Thirty percent agreed that they frequently had to counteract what the Indian children learned at home in order to prepare them to live in modern American society; thirty percent felt this was not true and an equal percentage were not sure. Fifteen percent of the teachers felt that in spite of what teachers did, the culture of Indian children impeded their learning; thirty percent were undecided, while nearly half disagreed. One teacher also felt tribal religious beliefs sometimes impeded Indian children's learning abilities.

The family background of Indian children was regarded as supportive of education by only 15 percent of the teachers while thirty-eight percent felt it was not. Only thirty percent of the teachers were convinced that most parents wanted to help their children in school; fifteen percent thought "some parents did, while others didn't;" and nearly half felt the statement was neither true or false. Again, thirty percent of the teachers regarded Indian parents as being very anxious for their children to learn; twenty-three percent felt parents were not; and thirty-eight percent were undecided.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what this school tries to teach.	1 (8%)	5 (38%)	2 (15%)	4 (30%)
It is often necessary that a teacher must counteract what the Indian child is taught at home so as to prepare him to live in today's American society.		4 (30%)	4 (30%)	4 (30%)
The teacher should not encourage Indian students in becoming more independent of parental control.	2 (15%)	4 (46%)	4 (30%)	
	True	False	Neither	Strongly Disagree
The family background of Indian children is supportive of their learning in school.	2-15%	5-38%	5-38%	
No matter what we do in school, the culture of Indian children impedes their learning.	2-15%	6-26%	4-30%	
Tribal religious beliefs impede the learning ability of Indian children	1- 8%	6-46%	5-38%	Some do don't 2-15%
Indian parents want to help their children in school.	4-30%		6-46%	
Indians are very anxious for their children to learn at school.	4-30%	3-23%	5-38%	

Teachers descriptions of parental contact follow:

Teachers who met 10-40% of the parents:

I've met some parents at open house, more mothers than father. We have had a friendly talk. The parents have been friendly and we were surprised at the number of books on Indians in the library.

I've met some parents, usually mothers at parent-teacher conferences and at PTA. We discuss case histories, progress and I give them projects to help the student at home. The parents were generally indifferent but some showed concern.

I've met two parents at open houses. I've met the parents of about four families, usually just the mother. We talk about the child's work and how he was getting along with other children. The parents have been interested and co-operative.

Teachers who met all or nearly all of the Indian Parents:

I've met at least one parent for all but one of my children. Usually I just meet the mother. I've talked with them at open house, PTA and parent teacher conferences.

I've met at least one parent for all of the kids except for one. Usually only the mother comes. I met them at open houses, we have one in the fall and one in the spring, and at parent-teacher conferences.

I've met someone from all except for one family who is a new arrival. I've met half the fathers and half the mothers. We had a friendly talk about the student's progress. They have been friendly.

I've met someone from all the families, usually the mother, at open house or parent-teacher conferences. We discuss the usual problems and progress reports. The parents are friendly.

I've met all the parents, some mothers and some fathers at open house, parent-teacher conferences, and at family night. We have discussed the children's progress and motivation. The parents seemed interested.

I met one parent from each family, both in some cases. We generally talk and sometimes we talk about the child's progress. The parents have been friendly and cooperative.

I've met at least one from each family, mostly mothers, at open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and PTA meetings. We have discussed student progress, Indians and I've asked them questions about Indian lore. The parents have been interested and cooperative.

Conferences, open house. I met all the mothers and one father. Half of the parents were cooperative, I got no answers from the others.

I've met either the mother or father of all my students. We discussed the student's progress. They have been very cooperative.

I've met all at least one parent for all students except one. I've talked to them at open houses, occasionally at parent-teacher conferences. This year is the first year teachers are not required to hold teacher conferences unless they are requested by the parents.

I've met some mothers and some fathers. We have talked about the student problems. The parents have been cooperative in all but one case.

Use of Indian people as resource people

Most teachers (85%-11) reported that Indian people had been used as resource people at Spencer. One teacher did not know if Indian people were used at Spencer; another said they had never been utilized. The most frequently mentioned function Indian people performed was working as a teacher's aide (sixty-nine percent of the teachers mentioned this). At the time field work was done, Spencer employed an Indian high school boy as a part-time teacher's aide, He helped two teachers with "recess and art." A few teachers (15%) had attended inservice sessions which were conducted by Indians, and thirty percent had used Indians to demonstrate Indian artifacts, dancing or crafts. Only one teacher used an Indian person as a consultant; however, this was on an occasional basis. Two teachers (15%) were also familiar with the "Runner" (an Indian weekly television program).

Are Indian People used as Resource People at Spencer?

For teacher references and inservice, not in the classroom.

For the faculty, there was a panel of Indians discussing their backgrounds. There is an Indian teacher's aide at Spencer. I feel there should be no special attention paid to any one ethnic group, that all kids should be treated the same.

Yes, students and mothers were used as aides. Indians have been used as resource people in art, music, crafts.

Someone demonstrating Indian artifacts and dances, also on Channel 2, "The Runner."

On TV and as aides.

The usual to demonstrate arts, crafts, dances and as aides.

A father came in to show Indian artifacts; as aides.

As aides. I use a resource Indian consultant occasionally.

Teachers' Positions on Assimilation

The three measures of Spencer teachers' assimilation positions elicited slightly different responses. The few interview questions designed to determine assimilation attitudes were largely unsuccessful. The questionnaire contained two relevant questions: teachers were asked to select one of four positions as most indicative of their attitude and Spencer's attitude toward assimilation, and in another section they were asked whether they agreed that Indian people should become completely assimilated into the larger American society.

Based on the first question, nearly half (46%) of the teachers endorsed the man-of-two cultures position--Indians should be oriented to combined Indian "ways" and white "ways". A few (15%) felt Indians should be oriented to respect some Indian "ways" but to change predominately toward the white "ways." None expressed the opinions that Indians should remain predominately identified with Indian "ways", but should accept some white "ways". Two teachers couldn't agree with any of the positions listed; one replied, "I can't answer...the question is not Indian versus white, but Indian economics versus capitalistic economics."

Teachers assessed Spencer's position as slightly more assimilation-oriented. Twenty-three percent felt the school was orienting Indians to respect some Indian "ways", but encouraging them to change predominately toward accepting white "ways;" thirty percent agreed the man-of-

two cultures position accurately reflected the school's attitude. One teacher thought Spencer was attempting to orient students to adopt some white "ways," yet encouraged them to remain predominately identified with Indian culture, while another teacher felt this position, combined with the man-of-two cultures view were the most accurate assessments of the school's opinion.

	<u>Own Opinion</u>	<u>School's Opinion</u>
Orient the Indian student to slowly lose identification with the Indian "ways" to assure adaptation to white ways of doing things.		
Orient the Indian students to respect some Indian ways yet to change predominately toward the white ways.	2-15%	3-23%
Orient the Indian students to combine both ways.	6-26%	4-30%
Orient the Indian students to accept some white "ways" but to remain predominately identified with the Indian ways.		1- 8%
None of the above.	2-15%	2-15%
I can't answer this. The question is not Indian vs. white, but Indian economics vs. capitalistic economics.	1- 8%	
No data.	2-15%	2-15%

When asked if Indian people should become completely assimilated into society, only one teacher agreed while over half disagreed. A few teachers were undecided.

The Indian people should become completely assimilated with the larger American Society

Strongly Agree	
Agree	1- 8%
Undecided	2-15%
Disagree	6-46%
Strongly disagree	2-15%
No data	2-15%

In their interviews, half (54%-7) of Spencer teachers made no positive or negative evaluations of "Indian culture," but stressed the importance of teaching children the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in modern urban America:

What do your Indian Children Need Most in their Education?

I can't think of anything, I have good students.

To be rewarded and praised in order to develop more self confidence.

Developing a better self-concept, meeting with success, situations.

They need early help in communication skills to gain confidence and to get off to the right start.

Smaller classes. Remove disruptive children, provide better facilities, not necessarily a separate school.

More of everything in this area for all children.

A feeling of involvement and participation. I can see they are interested by their eyes and attitudes.

While forty-six percent (6) did not overtly attack aspects of Indian culture, they noted the lack of cooperation or mutual consensus of goals between home and school, and strongly implied this situation impeded children's learning. These teachers did not say Indians should be assimilated into the larger society, but the implication appeared to be there:

To try to provide more new and varied experiences. To try to work out a good relationship between home and school so there aren't two conflicting standards.

They need encouragement from home and cooperation between home and school. All children need this.

What any student needs, more backing at home from parents.

Getting to school on time, regular attendance. But do the Indians themselves want this, to become part of the white culture?

A background of skills at home at an early age. They seem not to be regulated to schedules and rules at home and can't cope with them in school.

More interest from parents, this is also true of some students though.

Classroom Teachers' Relationship to Tribal Culture

Sixty percent (8) of Spencer teachers made attempts to relate aspects of Indian life to the context of their ongoing curricula. However, Indians were treated curiously and in a primarily historical context. Half (four teachers) emphasized local tribes; two had units on them. Contemporary Indians were also discussed by two teachers:

Indians are not included in second grade. I did talk about Indian contributions during Indian week.

We discuss Latin American Indians, but not North American Indians this year. We did talk about Indians though, during Indian week.

I included it where it was relevant. In the study of different kinds of homes, and families, in farm studies of agriculture. I don't single them out for study as I don't single out any ethnic group. I bring it in only where it's relevant, like when we study varying ways families solve problems of need.

When we study Canada and Latin America, we talk about the Indian's ability to exist and travel and survive in their homeland. We also study Aztecs, and Mayas. A sequel to "Old Yeller" was being read aloud to the class. When I came to derogatory remarks about Indians, I changed the words. I didn't realize when I started the book that Indians were often pictured in the usual stereotypes, 'blood thirsty savages, etc.' I always take time to discuss both sides of any controversial issue and particularly point out positive aspects of Indian behavior. The Indian students did not seem to take any of it personally but seemed to accept it as a story about something that happened a long time ago.

We discuss contemporary Indians based on contemporary news items brought in by students.

As a part of the study of Minnesota. I have also taught minority contributions and human relations on my initiative where and when it was relevant.

We have a unit on the Indians of our country, particularly those in Minnesota. We have movies too. We had movies of modern urban Indians but not of those in Minneapolis.

A study of the Sioux and Chippewa here in Minnesota.

A TV series dealing with Indians from this area.

Thirty-eight percent (5) of the teachers recognized some students were Indian and had tribal identities but made no attempt to undermine or enhance the meaning of Indianness to these children.

Over half of Spencer's teachers (69%) felt courses dealing with local Indian history and culture should be included in the curriculum. Twenty-three percent were undecided.

There should be courses in the curriculum which teach the local Indian history and culture.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	No Data
3-23%	6-46%	3-23%	1-8%

Sixty percent of the teachers favored using local cultural materials as subject matter in their regular classes (math, reading, English, etc.), while one-third were undecided.

Courses such as math, reading, English, etc., should use local cultural materials as subject matter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	No Data
2-15%	6-46%	4-30%	1-8%

Teachers' Perception of Indian Students

Sixty-nine percent of Spencer teachers held stereotyped images of their Indian students. Everything one teacher said about her pupils involved rigid stereotypes. She described them as: withdrawn, quiet, passive, reluctant to speak up or volunteer information, and never attempting to raise questions in class discussion. In her opinion Indian children enjoyed the following aspects of school:

Little girls like to color, boys prefer outdoor activities.

They like number work all except the new arrival who didn't have much background in numbers.

At this age, first grade, there is no difference between the races. Kids aren't aware of differences at this age.

Later the teacher contradicted herself when discussing discipline problems unique to Indian children: "time isn't as important to them as to most children."

Less rigid stereotypes were expressed by thirty percent (4) of the teachers.

	Yes	No	Freq- uently	Reluct- antly	Never	Sometimes
Indians are quiet and withdrawn	2	1				1
They speak up and volunteer infor- mation			1	2		
They raise quest- ions in discussion			1		or rarely	2
They are passive	2					1
They are active	1					

All of these teachers had noticed uniquely Indian characteristics which they felt would help the children become successful adults:

They are friendly and accepting, the boys are good athletes.
All are good at art.

Accepting of things as they are.

They have a cooperative spirit among themselves, loyalty or strong group spirit. They are open to suggestions.

They are proud and loyal to the tribe.

Half of them felt language problems plagued Indian students:

They have language problems, with words and names.

They're all possessed of serious language problems.

Two teachers also observed areas in which all Indian students needed help:

More regular attendance, a concept of being on time, they need more sleep.

They are lacking in a good self-image and therefore may be less conscientious or responsive to any stimulation offered in class.

While thirty-eight percent (5) occasionally mentioned Indian children as individuals, their general perceptions remained stereotyped.

	Yes	No	Freq- uently	Reluct- antly	Never	Some- times	Depends on Child
Indians are quiet and withdrawn	1	3				1	
They speak up and volunteer infor- mation			1	1	1		2
They raise questions in discussions			2		1	3	
They are passive		4					
They are active	4					1	

Three teachers observed "Indian qualities" which would help children achieve success in adulthood:

They are not overly aggressive or pushy.

They wish to be helpful, they are good thinkers and have good ideas on their own, and are creative.

They are artistic and appreciate nature.

Three teachers (one had also mentioned uniquely "Indian qualities") noted areas in which all Indian children required help:

They have language problems in doing classwork and understanding assignments. Some have difficulties concentrating and finishing a project, but more so than other children.

Indians do have language problems. They are shy, they don't always understand what has been said. They also have trouble listening and following directions and sticking to a project.

Some children haven't talked much yet. They seem to have trouble communicating. They have trouble with listening skills. They are stubborn when pushed in a corner, they can't be forced.

In terms of academic interest, two teachers thought Indians' preferences were no different from those expressed by other children, while three felt they were most interested in non-academic activities--music, crafts, art, and gym.

Although twenty-three percent (3) of the teachers were particularly uninformed about their Indian students, they refrained from stereotyping them, and made genuine efforts to understand their students as individuals.

	yes	No	Freq- uently	Reluct- antly	Never	Some- times	Depends on Child
Indians are quiet and withdrawn	1						2
They speak up and volunteer infor- mation			1				2
They raise questions in discussion			1			1	1
They are passive	2						
They are active		1					

Two teachers perceived qualities some Indian students possessed which would lead them to successful adulthood. However, these teachers did not attribute these characteristics to all Indian students:

Most are good natured and seem to have an inner strength and an ability to bounce back from daily frustrations.

One student is vivacious and likes to get involved in things.

All of the teachers briefly discussed some individual problems facing Indian children:

Some have difficulty participating in class discussion.

Some need help in being better listeners, in improving work habits, and in getting to school at all. Generally my students don't talk enough to be able to tell if they have language problems.

One out of my five or six Indian students shows a lack of physical energy. The rest move along just like the other children. Some Indian students might need help in being willing and having a desire to learn.

None of the teachers felt there were unique discipline problems with Indian students. Less academic subjects--art, nature study, gym, music--were regarded as the activities Indians enjoyed most (by two teachers). However, they felt this was universally true of all children. One teacher felt her Indian and non-Indian students enjoyed "everything" equally well.

The questionnaire contained three questions which reflected teachers' perceptions of Indian students. Nearly half felt Indians were shy and lacking in confidence, while a few refused to accept either stereotype. Indian children were regarded as well behaved by thirty percent of the teachers, but twenty-three percent disagreed and thirty-eight percent rejected the opportunity to stereotype Indians. None of the teachers accepted the positive stereotype that Indians were more courageous and brave than white children. In fact, thirty-eight percent rejected it, while over half felt the statement was neither true or false.

	True	False	Neither	No Data
In the classroom, Indian children are shy and lack confidence	6-46%	3-23%	3-23%	1-8%
Indian children are well behaved and obey rules	4-30%	3-23%	5-38%	1-8%
Compared to white children, Indian children are brave and courageous		5-38%	7-54%	1-8%

Attitudes Toward Teaching Indian Children

Half (53%-7) of Spencer's teachers expressed overall neutral attitudes toward teaching Indian children. While most mentioned "Indian characteristics" which made a teacher's job more difficult, they would neither encourage or discourage their friends to teach in schools serving Indian children:

Their high mobility rate and tardiness (makes teaching harder).
(She would neither encourage or discourage friends from teaching Indians.)

Prospective inner city school teachers should be made aware of the disadvantages and problems.

They have a harder time expressing an opinion, I'm unsure of what they really feel, this (makes teaching harder).

I wouldn't encourage (friends to teach them) but I wouldn't discourage the either.

Especially on a one to one (basis it's easier to teach them).
It's harder because of their lack of ability to want to relate and communicate. I wouldn't encourage or discourage them either (from teaching here).

I have bright students and they are just easier to work with. But one child (out of six) keeps things to herself about personality clashes and fights with other children. I wouldn't (encourage friends to teach them) but I wouldn't discourage them either.

They are not that different. They won't wear their glasses. I admit that it is a strange complaint, but its been my experience that Indian students who owned glasses were reluctant to wear them: (she would encourage friends to teach them.)

They are not as belligerent or aggressive.
(Would you encourage friends to teach them?) It depends on the personality of the individual, he needs patience.

Their reticence and reluctance to speak up in class (makes teaching harder). I'd encourage friends to teach them because I like kids of any kind.

A few teachers (23%-3) were fairly happy teaching Indian students at Spencer:

There is nothing easier or harder about teaching them. I would encourage my friends to teach them, there's more variety in inner city schools; it's educational and challenging for teachers.

Their friendliness makes teaching easier. It's hard teaching them, to begin with, they have to accept you. Because I enjoy my Indian students I would encourage friends to teach them.

It's easier because they don't hold a grudge, they bounce back from frustrations. Nothing makes it harder. I would encourage my friends to teach them.

Generally negative attitudes toward teaching Indian children were expressed by twenty-three percent (3) of Spencer's teachers:

Helping them individually in academic areas is easier. It is harder to teach them because they don't realize the necessity for rules in all activity areas. They do not learn well in group situations. A classroom is just not for them. I would not encourage my friends to teach them. The Indians and slow whites are deficient in skills before they ever reach school. Yet the school's teaching methods are held responsible. The 'help' the students get is not effective at such a late age (5-15 years old) and it is quite frustrating to work in programs of Indian and minority education when the help is not given where it is most desperately needed--in pre-school years. The schools are not failing. They are doing a miraculous job considering the educational deprivation of the child when he begins formal education.

It's not harder or easier to teach Indians. I would not encourage or discourage friends to teach here, it would depend on the individual and whether he could take teaching in a target area school. It takes more stamina because of discipline.

It's harder to teach Indians because of a too-permissive attitude at home. Some are belligerent and get involved in fights. If they understood the problems involved, particularly in the area of discipline, (she would encourage them to teach Indians) I stay at Spencer because I understand the children and feel it is easier for me here than perhaps some teacher new to the area.

Comments on Job Satisfaction

If responses to the question, "Would you encourage your friends to teach in schools serving Indian children " are regarded as a projective measure of job satisfaction, then the presence of Indian children may be only one of many factors influencing the ambivalent or negative feelings teachers expressed toward their jobs. Only thirty percent (4) enjoyed their work enough to encourage their friends to teach at Spencer.

Teachers's Perception of Indian Student's Interest in Education

Questionnaire Data

The teacher questionnaire contained two measures which reflect teacher's perceptions of the degree of interest Indian children have in formal education. A few teachers agreed Indian students were more interested in having a good time than in working hard. Thirty-eight percent felt this was not true, while thirty-eight percent felt the statement was neither true or false. Only one teacher perceived Indians as eager students; over half felt they were not particularly committed to learning.

Teacher Perception of Indian Students Interest in Education

	True	False	Neither
Indian pupils would rather spend their time having a good time than working hard to get ahead.	2-15%	5-38%	5-38%
Indian children are eager students with a highly developed desire to learn.	1- 8%	8-60%	3-23%

In the interviews, teachers more completely assessed Indian children's interest in education.

Interview Data

A few teachers (15%-2) did not feel Indian students were very interested in the academic aspect of school:

They like art.

They like the security best and going along with the group.

Nearly half (46%-6) reported Indian children's preference for less academically oriented classes (such as art, music, phy-ed) rather than strictly academic subjects:

They enjoy art and gym and dislike oral book reports and other activities that invoke reciting before the whole class.

Art and phy-ed are their favorites; some like reading. They don't like being read to--it's "baby stuff." They don't like shadow stories because of their shyness.

Field trips are what they enjoy most. They like art and being read to best. Some like reading if they are successful at it, others like science. Indians dislike math, some don't like being in front of the class.

They enjoy field trips, baseball and soccer most. Singing, art, gym are their favorite subjects. All seem to like social studies, so do all students, and like all students, they dislike math.

Indians like music, rhythm, arts, crafts and creative dramatics best. They enjoy listening to stories, situation games and working with their hands. Writing is disliked.

Indian girls like to color best and boys prefer outdoor activities. All but one likes number work.

Twenty-three percent (3) of Spencer teachers thought Indian children enjoyed some academic subjects at least as well as less academically oriented classes:

I don't know what they enjoy most, they like reading, math, phy-ed, music, art and science.

They like everything in the SLDR program, especially individually structured activities.

Indians enjoy free play, wandering about and unstructured activities. They like nature study, drawing, social studies, and story dictation. They don't like arithmetic, music, number games, or structural routeness, reading in groups, paperwork or word study.

One teacher (8%) felt the Indian students had "no favorite subjects", and added, "they are no different from the other students."

Perception of Indian Students' Home Environment

Ninety-two percent (12) of Spencer's teachers held negative conceptions of their Indian students family lives. Although 77% felt Indian parents treated their children with love and respect equal to that given to white children by their parents, fifteen percent did not know if this was true. Teachers were reluctant to respond to a question assessing the practical competence of Indian people; nearly half thought they were competent, and over half did not respond to the question. A few teachers felt (23%) Indian people let other people take advantage of them too often; 38% felt this was untrue, and thirty percent expressed ambivalent attitudes.

	True	False	Neither	No Data
Indian parents treat their children with love and respect equal to that given to white children by their parents.	10-77%		2-15%	1- 8%
Indian people are not competent concerning practical things.		6-46%		7-54%
Indians tend to let other people take advantage of them too much of the time.	3-23%	5-38%	4-30%	1- 8%

Most teachers (69%) regarded Indian parents' lack of concern and commitment to educating their children, or a conflict of values between home and school as the main impasse to Indian children's success in school and as the major cause of their high drop-out rate. A few teachers (23%-3) also considered specific child rearing practices, especially permissiveness, as complicating Indian children's problems at Spencer:

Family attitudes, the feeling of defeat and frustration, cause the drop-out rate.

Lack of communication, a form of generation gap [cause the drop-out rate]. [The family background of Indian students is not supportive of education].

Indian children lack encouragement from home and cooperation between home and school. They drop out because education lacks relevance to their lives.

[There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children at home, and what this school tries to teach].

[There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children at home and what this school tries to teach]. We need to try to work out a good relationship between home and school so there aren't two conflicting standards.

Getting them to school, truancy create discipline problems. They drop out because of a lack of assimilation into society, lack of motivation and a defeatist attitude.

Lack of success, financial situation at home so they have to go quit and work[create a high drop out rate]. Parents are generally indifferent [about their children's school progress] but some show concern. [There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what this school tries to teach. Indian parents aren't very anxious for their children to learn at school].

Indians don't see the value of education, what's in it for them. A spotty attendance record leads to getting behind, getting discouraged and giving up and dropping out. [Indian parents aren't supportive of education and they aren't very anxious for them to learn].

[There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what this school tries to teach them, often teachers must counteract what Indian children are taught at home to prepare them to live in today's American society. The family background of Indian's doesn't support education].

Indian students need more backing from home. They drop out because they are easily frustrated and discouraged. The students are defensive and eager to fight, fighting and bad language are sometimes directed at the teacher.

[Teachers must often counteract what Indian children are taught at home to prepare them to live in modern society]. Lack of parental concern [accounts for dropouts]. Some Indian parents want to help their children in school, others don't. Indians need more interest from their parents. I've heard about fights at St. Stephens after powwows.

[Indian students school problems] are primarily a home problem--getting to school on time and regular attendance [are problems], but do the Indians themselves want this, i.e. to become a part of white culture.

The curriculum gets too difficult around the junior high level. Also poor attendance leads to falling behind and getting discouraged and they drop out.

They have also become more aggressive, or belligerent and fighting because of a too permissive attitude at home. [There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what the school tries to teach; teachers most often counteract what these children learn at home to prepare them to live in American society. Indians' family background doesn't support education. No matter what teachers do, Indian culture impedes their learning as does tribal religion sometimes. Some Indian parents want to help their children in school, some don't].

A teacher can't motivate children, the home must show interest. Only half of the parents are cooperative and interested in their children's school papers. They are not regulated to schedules and rules at home and can't cope with them at school. The high dropout rate results from: early failure and frustrations as early as kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. Interest in school is then lowered and academic excellence is not stressed at home. This is true for many children, not only Indian. Early failure requires a patient, supportive teacher, yet one who requires certain qualities and standards of both behaviors and work. Indian students also lack self discipline to get a job done and to listen and focus their attention. Aggressiveness and "naughtiness" are not a great Indian problem in grade one.

The schools are not failing. They are doing a miraculous job considering the educational deprivation of the child when he begins formal education. It is a mistake to describe learning problems as uniquely Indian. The same problems are present in most [not all!] slow learners in the inner-city. The slow learning whites show the same deficiency of background skills as slow learning Indians. The successful Indian children have the same skills as successful blacks or whites. As a primary teacher, I see

how six year-old children are behind their peers in language long before they reach school age. The differences are obvious even in Headstart, which I taught. Children are 'programmed' for learning as infants and this is where the education is needed. I would love to see a program to help mothers [Indian and white] to stimulate and teach their children when they are very young. The schools do not reach children when they are at their highest. Children want to and love to learn most when they are babies and very young. So many Indian homes believe in child freedom that the parents don't guide their young on skills they must have to succeed in school. Remediation is not the answer. Mothers are, or can be the best teacher a Child will ever have. Some child mothers know exactly what to teach their children. Others don't know what to do, but would welcome advice and help. They love their children and want the best for them. I think most mothers, Indian and white, would welcome a helpful program of early infancy and childhood training. I hope some day a program will be tried along these lines.

[There is a conflict between what most Indian parents teach their children and what the school tries to teach them, teachers must often counteract what the children learn at home to prepare them to live in American society. Indians' family background does not support education, their culture impedes learning, and Indians are not very anxious for their children to learn in school].

Teachers' Ideas for Improving Indian Education

All of the teachers had suggestions for helping less successful Indian students acquire academic competence. Sixty-nine percent (9) thought individualized attention, combined with praise and encouragement from the teacher, would be the most successful method for motivating children:

I am satisfied with recent new additions concerning minority groups including Indians. We need a sensitivity to their needs, to encourage them and praise them.

I recommend more individual attention. More out of school activities of a social nature with teachers. Making them feel you care and giving them motivation.

More individual attention by repeating or redefining instructions or assignments individually.

Praising them even for minor things, giving them encouragement. The same as I would help any student, Indian or not. Accepting things as they are and less emphasis on differences (ethnic) would help Indian students.

Spend more time with individuals and give them encouragement. They shouldn't be singled out for study or special programs.

They could reduce the classroom size, I could spend more time with each student.

By special and individualized attention as in the SLRD program.

More personal contact to give help and encouragement.

Establish a relaxed atmosphere, diagnose the needs of the individual, establish a rapport with the child and help establish a good self-image. Then I would work on modifying the speech behavior. I believe I have an advantage because of the one-to-one relationship.

I have a store once a week in my office where my speech students can buy things with the points they had built up in class. I had a large selection of 5 and 10 cent things for them. ITPA for diagnosis, variety of materials made by teacher to suit individual.

One teacher was convinced that if she "could help them be neater [in their work]," her Indian student's academic success would increase. Another felt extensive use of the Peabody Language Kit would alleviate her Indian students' communications problems.

Diametrically opposing ideas were expressed by fifteen percent (2) of Spencer teachers who regarded Indian students' lack of success as parental failures, which only parents could meliorate :

It's primarily a home problem, but smaller class size would help so there would be more individual attention.

The only way is to help Indian mothers educate and stimulate their infants and young children before they come to school. Regular attendance, parental interest and involvement in school, and a degree of language development. (This is true of any child.) Motivate children, a teacher can't; the home must show interest.

Evaluation of the Need for Training to work with Indian Children

Special courses or experiences to prepare teachers for working with Indian children were regarded as unnecessary by three (23%) Spencer teachers:

The same skills need to be taught and the same skill deficiencies are present whether the child is Indian or white.

They are not particularly needed.

From my own experience I would say no. Judging from the experience of teachers of older students it sounds like it might be helpful.

Over half (69%-9) of the teachers gave a vaguely positive response to the idea of a minimum amount of special training or education. Three (23%) felt the "experience itself would be most helpful". The remaining forty-six percent (6) suggested knowledge of the cultural background of Indian students "would promote understanding," "make one more understanding," or "give a greater appreciation and sensitivity to their culture."

Only one teacher (8%) seemed concerned with improving teacher preparation:

Courses are needed. Personally, I would like more information about contemporary Indian problems as well as cultural background.

Administrators:

Three teachers (23%) did not feel administrators of Indian schools should have special training or experiences to prepare them for their responsibilities:

No, most go too far one way or the other. You can't just concentrate on Indian studies or Black studies. You have to balance.

They should be aware of the learning difficulties. His experience is most useful.

(Only one of these teachers was also opposed to special training for teachers.) Vaguely positive responses to the idea were given by three (23%) of the teachers. One commented: "It wouldn't do them any harm, it might even help". Forty-six percent implied courses dealing with the cultural background would be helpful to administrators; those who had favored special training for teachers made additional suggestions:

Inner-city administrators should have special training.

Courses to help him understand the cultural background (she opposed special training for teachers).

Training specifically geared to administrators to help them handle more serious problems. (She opposed special training for teachers.)

Something extra peculiar to administrators' problems.

In addition some training in the legal and financial ways to help Indians.

Extra training about counseling of Indian parents.

Spencer Indian Student Background Information

As a result of field problems at Spencer it was possible to interview only seven Indian students--one fifth grade girl and six sixth grade boys. Two students lived with aunts, the rest lived with their parents. Four students had attended school outside the Twin Cities:

<u>Other Schools Attended</u>	<u>Years at Spencer</u>
Osage, Becker, Big Lake	2 years
Waconia	1 year
White Earth	4 years
Milwaukee, Cleveland, Iowa	2 years

Four students were members of the Chippewa tribe, three were Sioux, and one student didn't know his tribal affiliation. All of the students who were interviewed planned to graduate from high school while four (57%) intended to go to college.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>How Far Will you Go in School</u>	<u>What do you want to do when you grow up.</u>
5	F	12	cab driver or hair stylist
6	M	12	don't know
6	M	12	don't know
6	M	College, major in geometry	baseball player
6	M	College	doctor
6	M	College, Major in art	baseball or hockey player
6	M	College	Policeman or scientist

Students' Perception of Parental Attitudes Toward Education

Four students felt their parents wanted them to obtain an education, but did not demonstrate deep concern about it. Their parents had told them to:

Buckle down and do the work.

To go, I get more progress out of it than staying home.

Do my work.

Not to fight and to do my work.

These students give their parents the following information about Spencer:

I tell them it's all right.

I don't talk about it much.

I tell them everything that I do--work, play, recess.

I tell them I hate it. I don't like to get up in the morning.

The parents of two Spencer Indian students stressed the importance of staying in school, learning as much as possible, and graduating from high school:

My aunt says I've got to keep working hard and buckle down.

They say I must work hard; they ask the teachers about how I get along and how I do.

The students told their parents about:

Teachers and the candy sale.

About my friends, activities and events.

One child and his parents perceived the educational setting as a hostile environment. He told his parents, "I don't like school, the penalties are too mean." The only parental instructions he received were, "Fight back, don't let the other kids hit you."

Students' Perception of Parental Attitudes about Spencer

Data was available for three families. Two students reported they felt their parents did not like Spencer, one said his parents felt it was a "nice" school.

Student's Perception of Parental Involvement in School Affairs

One student said his parents had never come to Spencer. Another reported his aunt visited "only when something goes wrong." The response of five students indicated their parents were slightly involved in school affairs and had visited Spencer in the following situations:

They sometimes talk to the nurse about my absessed tooth.

My Mom broke her leg four months ago, so hasn't come lately.
She did come for PTA and conferences.

They come to open house.

They come when my 5th grade brother doesn't do his work and
my mother comes to a parent's picnic.

My uncle visited family night.

Spencer Students' Knowledge, Source of Knowledge and Attitudes Toward
Tribal Culture and Language

Culture

Two students knew nothing about their tribal culture, while five
students had minimal knowledge :

They (Sioux) are not much of a tribe any more. They have
Indian dances in the summers. I dance in powwows, but don't
have a costume. I can make rings and necklaces and a grand-
mother helped me make a drum.

They used to build statues and the houses were so well made
that you couldn't see them in the brush. They wore moccasins
and pants of buckskin.

The moccasins had rounded toes. I read a book of legends.
Some Indians had white men working on a 50-acre farm with
trucks and animals. One day the Indian went to town. The
white guy killed the Indian's wife, animals and burned down
the farm. When the Indians searched for him for five years
they went to all the states except Alaska and Hawaii. Finally
they found him in a Dairy Queen under a Glacier.

I dance in powwows and like them.

I know a little.

Two students had learned about their culture from parents and in
school. A grandmother taught one student. A boy who danced in powwows
had learned by watching other dancers, while reading books about Indians
was the information source for one student. Another student learned
about Chippewa culture at home and "up north."

One student was not interested in his tribal culture; he knew nothing about it and had no desire to learn or pursue its study. The rest of Spencer's Indian children wanted to learn more about their tribal background. However, none had a plan for increasing their knowledge. They expressed interest in several aspects:

I want to know the real way they lived, what they first thought when European people came over.

How they made beads and moccasins.

I want to know Chippewa, legends and about Custer's Last Stand.

I want to know how to make teepees.

I want to know how to make dance costumes and do beadwork.

I want to know how to dance in powwows and do Sioux beadwork.

Language

Three students could neither speak or understand their tribal language, while four had a minimal understanding of the language and knew a few words.

Two students used tribal language at home; one used it with parents and relatives. One student used it when he sang during powwows held at an Indian Center in Minneapolis.

Very negative feelings about tribal languages and culture were expressed by one student. He knew nothing about either and did not want to learn any aspect of tribal cultures or language. An indifferent attitude about tribal language was expressed by one student who felt he "wouldn't mind" if Chippewa were taught at Spencer. Five students thought it would be nice to know their tribal languages, but gave no reasons for wanting to learn it and no indication of plans to learn it.

Schools' Relationship to Tribal Culture

Three Spencer Indian Students felt the school curriculum should provide opportunities which would enable them to learn about tribal language and culture. Two students preferred to explore aspects of tribal culture at home, but felt the schools should teach tribal language. One student wanted to learn about culture at home and in school, but felt the school should be responsible for teaching language.

Students Opinions of Spencer

One student felt Spencer was worse than most schools:

I hate it [Spencer], I don't like to get up in the morning. Adams is better. I don't like anything about this school, there was not as much work or staying after at other schools. I don't like the teachers because I have to write apologies. I stay after 'cause I don't get the apologies done. [You have to write them] for smarting off, being late, and not getting finished.

He also disliked all of his classes.

Less negative opinions were expressed by three students. All liked at least one subject, and disliked one. Two thought the teachers were nice while one disliked kids:

Some are nice, most are not.

Spencer is pretty good, if you do something wrong or don't finish work, you have to stay after. I don't like penalties.

Adams is better. I stay after to do math or reading.

I already know what they're teaching; been to _____ schools. Trinity was better. Kids call me names-- "fatty."

If they were running the school, these students would make several changes:

I'd have some youth with good grades to teach, I'd get tutors. I wouldn't have computer paper. I'd be the principal and if they did something wrong I'd have them send down to me and not be so rough because I'd know how they'd feel.

I'd like to get out in May instead of June. I started earlier at the last school. I'd like to get out at 2:00.

I'd change recess hours, and make school shorter. We could leave at 2:00.

Three students felt Spencer was better than most schools, although it was not the best school they had attended :

It's better than Madison or Mann; kids and teachers are nicer than at other schools.

It's better than Harrison.

It's pretty good.

They all liked two or more of their classes. One boy would make changes at Spencer--he felt the principal should be an Indian.

Students' Interest in the Academic Aspect of School

One student who was interviewed was not really interested in the academic aspects of school; although he generally attended, he did not willingly participate in class activities. Mild interest in school was expressed by two students. Four students (57%) were quite interested in their classes and in learning. They enjoyed many classes and participated willingly in classroom activities. A summary of the academic likes and dislikes of the seven Spencer students follows.

Frequency of Likes and Dislikes of the Seven Spencer Students Interviewed

	<u>Like</u>	<u>Dislike</u>
Nothing	1	1
Penalties		1
Field Trips	1	
Activities	2	
Gym	2	
Art	3	1
Music		1
Penmanship		1
Social Studies	2	3
Math	3	4
Reading	1	2
Spelling	1	2
Language		2
Science	1	
No Subjects		1
Teachers	3	
Kids	1	1

Students Interest in the Non-Academic and Social Aspects of School

Lack of peer friendships was a source of frustration and unhappiness for two students who had only a few friends at Spencer. The remainder of the Indian students interviewed had many friends in school. One belonged to two clubs, a math club, and "Gray YMCA," which met after school.

Perceived Relationship of School to Adult Life

One student felt education was totally irrelevant to his adulthood. Two students thought school might have an important influence on their adult lives, but were vague as to the affect education could have. The influence education may have on employment opportunities was recognized by two students who felt finishing school would enable them to get "good jobs." One student felt that acquiring an education would result in a life-style differing from that of many Indians and from the life he could have expected to lead without an education.

Students Friendships and Perceptions of Non-Indian Peers

Nearly all the students interviewed (6) had Indian and non-Indian friends at Spencer. Half of these thought Indians and non-Indians were the same; half perceived differences between them:

Sometimes they (non-Indians) do different stuff than we do.

They are not too much different.

Some (non-Indians) are different, one always wanted to get into trouble.

One student who had only Indian friends did not feel non-Indians were different from Indians.

Perception of the Teacher's Job

Four students described the teacher's job as impersonal: "they teach kids, they teach kids work." The teachers duties were perceived more warmly by three students:

Teachers keep kids working, keep them out of trouble and stop fights.

Teachers make students learn more than they know and make them think school is good, not bad.

They help us learn math and reading.

Students Opinion of his teacher's performance

One student felt his teacher did a poor job: "She is kinda mean and picks on certain kids." Slightly positive views of teacher performance were expressed by two students who thought their teachers were "OK or about average." Four of the students who were interviewed felt their teachers were "pretty good", while two said they liked their teachers.

Teaching was not regarded as a desirable job--none of the Indian students really wanted to be teachers. One girl didn't know if she would like to teach, and two boys thought they "might" like to "teach kids." The reasons students gave for not wanting to teach demonstrated empathy for the teacher's position:

I'd get sick of teaching kids all day.

It takes time to do all the work.

You'd have to stay after school when you could be outside doing something.

You got to correct all them papers and give guys assignments and if you assign a story you have to proof read it and correct mistakes.

Tentative Conclusions

While it is too early to draw final conclusions and to offer specific recommendations for change regarding the structure and function of Spencer Elementary school, it is possible to offer some tentative statements at this time. The statements go beyond the school somewhat, since they also bear upon the relationship of Indian parents to the school situations faced by their elementary-age children. In a later report, we will deal more adequately with parental attitudes toward formal education, and in the concluding report on the formal education of Minneapolis Indian children we will offer some final conclusions as well as some specific recommendations for change. Such recommendations for change as are offered will no doubt include references to the Indian community itself. The following tentative statements may be made at this time:

1. Spencer teachers did not generally appear eager to accept their responsibilities as teachers, and to deliver their services to the Spencer Indian children with gusto and imagination.
2. Spencer teachers seemed to be cut off from adequate curricular inputs on American ethnic populations, including Indian Americans.
3. In-service existing capabilities and prospects for Spencer teachers seemed inadequate to meet their needs as teachers of young Indian children.
4. Related to this problem, Spencer teachers seemed reluctant to welcome the idea of rigorous in-service training, particularly that which might be associated with colligate-level credit courses.
5. Spencer teachers showed a rather appalling separation from available materials on contemporary Indians in the United States, and particularly in the Twin Cities. It is to be assumed, however, that this problem should not be placed at the feet of the teachers alone.
6. Spencer teachers may have been correct in pointing out parental, home, and community "problems" that relate to the problems many Indian children face in school. However, lest these teachers be unfairly regarded as too critical, "racists", or worse, let it be suggested that in their current configuration American schools almost necessarily reward the children from certain kinds of homes and punish those from other types of homes. The parents, homes and communities of Spencer

Indian children are generally--despite how unfair the situation might be--not prepared to cope with the social expectations of school and classroom in Spencer Elementary school.

7. Some Spencer teachers pointed out the need for parental assistance that might aid in reducing the disjunction between the life style of the school and the life styles of many Indian families. This suggestion is an important one, we believe, yet one which tends to frighten already nervous administrators because of some of the implications involved (see final report).
8. It is important to note that many Spencer teachers have probably engaged in stereotyping Spencer Indian children. [It is equally important to note that, sometimes, the distinction between a valid generalization and an over-generalization (or stereotype) can be narrow. It is important not to deny to Spencer elementary teachers their right to perceive a situation in a particular way; it is mandatory, however, that the teachers provide adequate, humane services to Indian children in the context of the school.]

These tentative generalizations will be amplified further in later reports, particularly those dealing with Indian parents, Indian homes and what has been called "the Indian community."

The Teachers of Minneapolis
Elementary Indian Children:
1969 Survey Results.
Harkins, Sherarts, Woods.

Copy 2

INDIAN AMERICANS

The Teachers of Mpls. Elementary
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